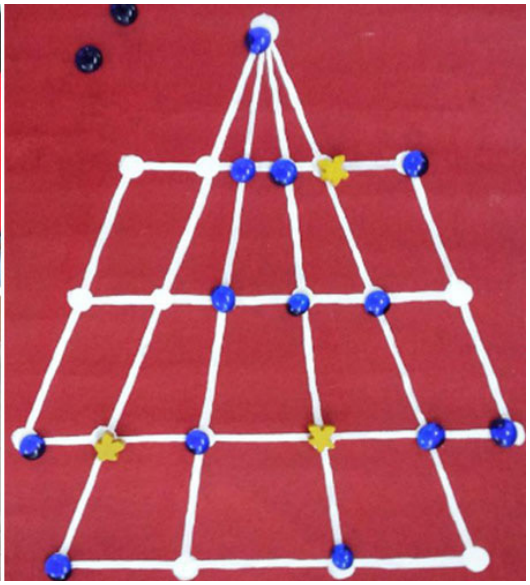
Design Resource

Indian Games

Culture of Play

by
Seema Periwal and Prof. Ravi Poovaiah
IDC, IIT Bombay



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Introduction

Games are a part of Indian history and its diverse culture. A wide variety of games is known to be played across all regions in India through generations by people of all ages. The inscriptions on the temple floors and walls and references to traditional games in the epics and mythological stories depict the culture of playing games as an important activity in Indian society. Games in India are played not just to fulfil the social need but also to teach important values like planning, strategizing, leadership, teamwork, perseverance, tolerance etc.

Indian games have evolved significantly over thousands of years. Many of the traditional games are no more played in cities where outdoor space is a constraint and are only played in the rural areas of the country. Some of these traditional games that require minimal equipment are now ironically termed as "Street Games," and are played by people who are unable to purchase games from the market. Games like Chess, Snakes and Ladder, Ludo, etc. are believed to have originated in India and then transmitted to other countries where they were further modified into the present-day version. Furthermore, various new games have been introduced into the culture to suit the current need of society like Doctor Doctor Help Us, Carrom, January February, etc.

However, one thing common with all games is that they are designed to provide enjoyment while developing both physical and mental skills. They are used as tools to improve concentration, hand-eye coordination, motor skills, sensory skills, logical thinking, strategy-building skills and math skills. Most importantly, games provide a mode of interaction among people of varied generations.

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Types of Games

In India, games are played by people of all ages in all parts of the country. Some games are played indoors like Chess, Parchisi, Carrom etc and some games are played outdoors games like Kho Kho, Lagori etc. There are some games which are occasion specific like marriage games that are played only during marriages and festival games which are played only during a particular festival. Many of these games require specific equipments like a board, dice, marbles, cards etc. Since India is a land of varied cultures and traditions, all games have been adapted to suit the region and its culture. One thing common among all games is that they all have 'Rules' and players are bound by these rules and in each game, there is an outcome of their actions.

Here the games have been broadly categorized the games into 4 distinct categories:
1. Indoor Games
2. Outdoor Games
3. Board Games
4. Marriage Games

Indoor Games:

- Aao Milo Shilo Shaalo
- Akkad Bakkad
- ChidiyaUdd
- Cowrie Shells
- January February
- Miss Mary Jab Choti Thi
- Pacheta
- Raja, mantri, Chor, Sipahi
- We are the captains

Outdoor Games:

- Aankh Micholi
- Doctor Doctor Help us
- Gilli Danda
- Kabaddi
- Kho Kho
- Kokla Chappaki
- Lagori
- Marbles
- Oonch Neech Ka Papda

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- Posham Pa
- Stapoo
- Vish Amrit

Board Games:

- Adu Puli Attam
- Carrom
- Chauka Bara
- Chinese Checkers
- Ludo
- Moksha Patam
- Pallankuzi

Marriage Games:

- Fish the Ring
- Jutti Chupai (Hiding the Shoes)
- Knotted Strings
- Henna Name Search

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Indoor Games

Aao Milo Shilo Shaalo

Akkad Bakkad

Chidiya Udd

Cowrie Shells

January February

Miss Mary Jab Choti Thi

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Pacheta

Raja, Mantri, Chor, Sipahi

We are the Captains

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Aao Milo Shilo Shaalo

Introduction:
This is one of the most favorite clapping games played amongst young girls during their free time. Children are seen playing it almost everywhere at all times. The game is a recital and is played between two (at times three) players facing each other and singing and clapping in a rhythmic pattern. The words and the clapping sequence vary from place to place. In this game, all participants are equally active at all times.

How to Play:
The players sit facing each other while reciting the song. They clap their hands in a particular fashion to match the rhythm of the song.

The song:
Aao Milo
Shilo shaalo
Kachcha dhaaga
Race laga lo
Humne todey dus pattey
Ek patta kachcha
Hiran ka bachcha
Hiran gaya paani me
Pakdi uski naani ne
Naani gayi London
Wahan se laayi kangan
Kangan gaye toot
Naani gayi rooth
Naani ko manayenge
Halwa poori khayenge
Halwaa poori achchi
Humne khaayee machchee
Machchee me kaanta
Tera mera chaanta
Chaanta laga zor se
Humne khaaye samosey
Samosey badey achchey
Nanaji namstey

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Variations:
Some versions end with saying STATUE! In this variation, the players have to hold themselves in the position they are in until the leader says 'OVER!'

Conclusion:
This game helps to develop coordination, self-confidence, communication and friendship in children. This game also helps young children learn about rhythm and pattern finding.

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Akkad Bakkad

Introduction:
'Akkad Bakkad' is a very popular game played in most Indian homes. This game does not need any other equipment other than human resources and a place to sit in a circle. The game is played between two or more players of varied age groups.

How to Play:
All the players sit in a close circle with their hands on the floor facing down and fingers spread apart. One player becomes the leader and participates by keeping only one hand as against all other players who place both their hands on the ground. Only the leader recites the song of Akkad Bakkad touching fingers of every player one by one. This continues in a clockwise manner touching one finger at a time. The player on whose finger the song ends (with the word bhaaga or be-sha-ram if playing with the extension version) closes his finger and the game continues by repeating the same recitation from the finger immediately next to the one closed. Each finger closed is skipped and not counted while reciting the song. One by one all fingers close and players with all five fingers closed can take their hands away. The player first with all ten fingers closed wins the game. The game continues until all the players get to close each of their fingers.

The song:
Akkad bakkad bambe bo
Assi nabbey poorey Sau
Sau me laga dhaaga
Chor nikal ke bhaaga

Extension:
Rani ki beti sothi thi
Moti ki mala boti thi
Chai garam biscuit naram
Khaane waale be-sha-ram

Variation:
A quicker version of this game is commonly seen being played when there are more players. In this variation, players may decide to close one hand instead of closing one finger at a time.
The game is played with variations in the song in other regions. In West Bengal, the game is played with the following song:

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Ikir mikir cham chikir,chamer kata mazumdar,
De elo damodar, damodarer hari kuri,
Deoale bose chal kuri, chal kurte holo bela,
Bhat khae se dupur bela, bhate porlo machi,
Kodal diye chachi, kodal holo bhota,
Khek sheyal er matha

Conclusion:
This game helps in developing patience and concentration in children. The game tests the knowledge of sequencing in children and provides a good platform for social interaction. This game also enhances leadership quality.

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Chidiya Udd

Introduction:
Chidiya Udd is a quick indoor game played between two or more children of varied age groups. The words 'Chidiya Udd' translates to 'fly away bird.' The game is a childhood favorite and can be played by a huge group.

How to Play:
Children sit in a close circle with their index fingers kept at a common point. One child becomes the leader and shouts a name - it can be an object, person, living, or non-living followed by the word Udd (fly) like in "Elephant Udd, Parrot Udd, Balloon Udd, etc." This is combined with a gesture of moving the index finger up in the air and bringing it back to rest. To this all players react by either raising their index finger or choosing not to raise it. The decision is made on the fact whether the name announced can fly in real or not. If it can, then all the players raise their fingers up along with the leader; otherwise, they sit still. Players are out of the game on two conditions either they do not raise their finger for a flying name or they raise their finger for a non-flying name. The game continues with every time the leader shouting a new name randomly until all players are out of the game. Kids take turns to become the leader for subsequent rounds of the games played.

Conclusion:
The game builds mental alertness and decision-making skills. It tests the knowledge of what flies and what does not and also offers good social interaction among the players. This game also enhances leadership quality.

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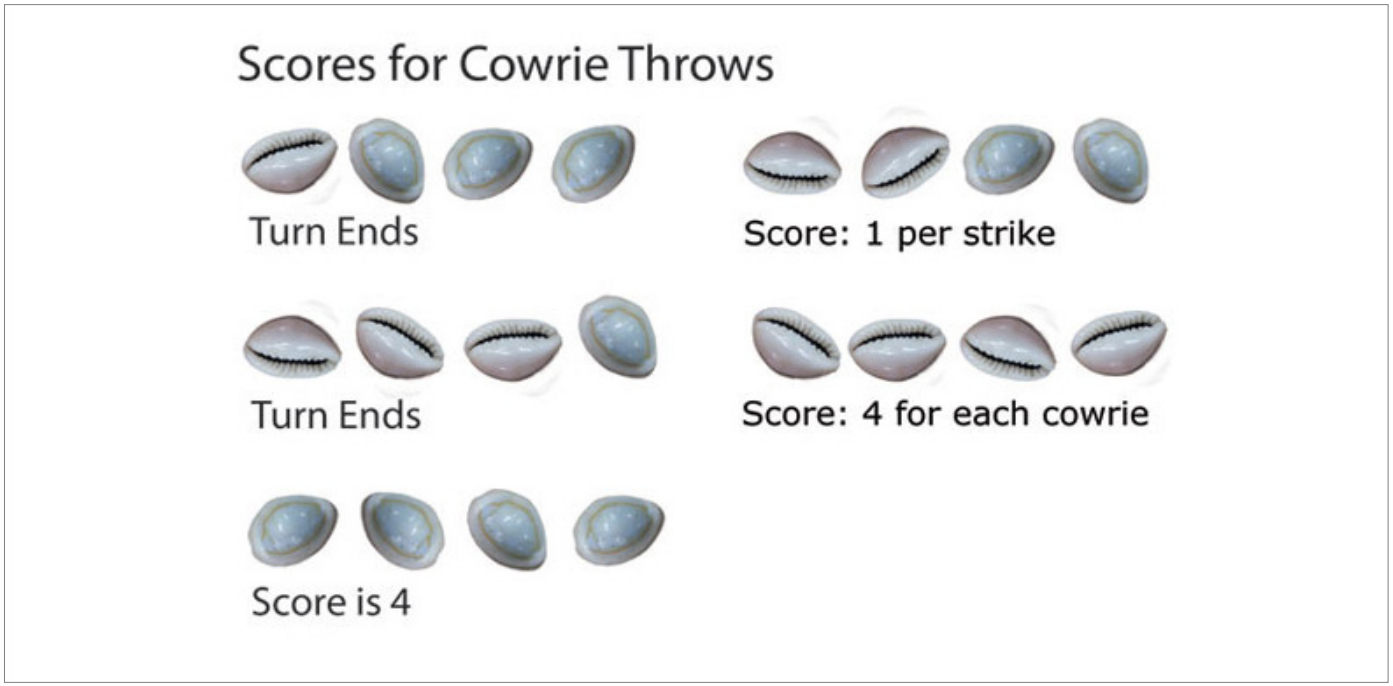
Cowrie Shells

Introduction:
Cowrie Shells (Kadi, Kaudi) game is played with 4 small cowrie shells by 2 or more players sitting in a circle. The game is usually played by people of 6 years and above. It is a popular game with village children as well as women but with the changing times, it is now an endangered game.

How to Play:
All players sit in a circle. The group unanimously decides on Player 1. The turn for other players moves in a clock-wise direction. In a turn, players have to throw all four cowrie shells on the floor and are scored based on the throw of all four cowrie shells. If all of cowries fall upside down on the floor with their mouth closed, the player gets eight points. If all 4 cowrie shells fall with their mouth open then all players try to grab them quickly from the ground and score 4 points for each shell collected. (The scores for various kinds of Cowrie throw is depicted in Fig. 1.) If two Cowrie shells fall upside down then the player has to strike the open-mouthed cowrie shells with closed mouthed cowrie shell with their finger. The player scores one point each for hitting his target. The turn comes to an end, if the player fails to hit the targeted shell or if three shells fall either opened mouth or closed mouth. The next player continues with their turn. The player who scores the maximum is the winner of the game.



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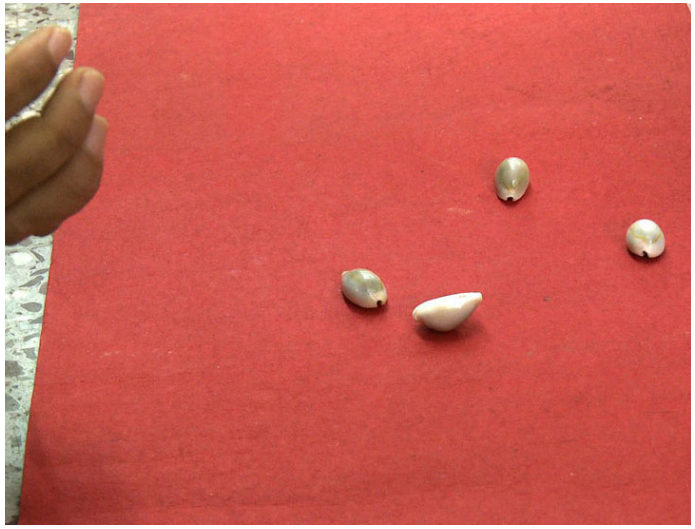
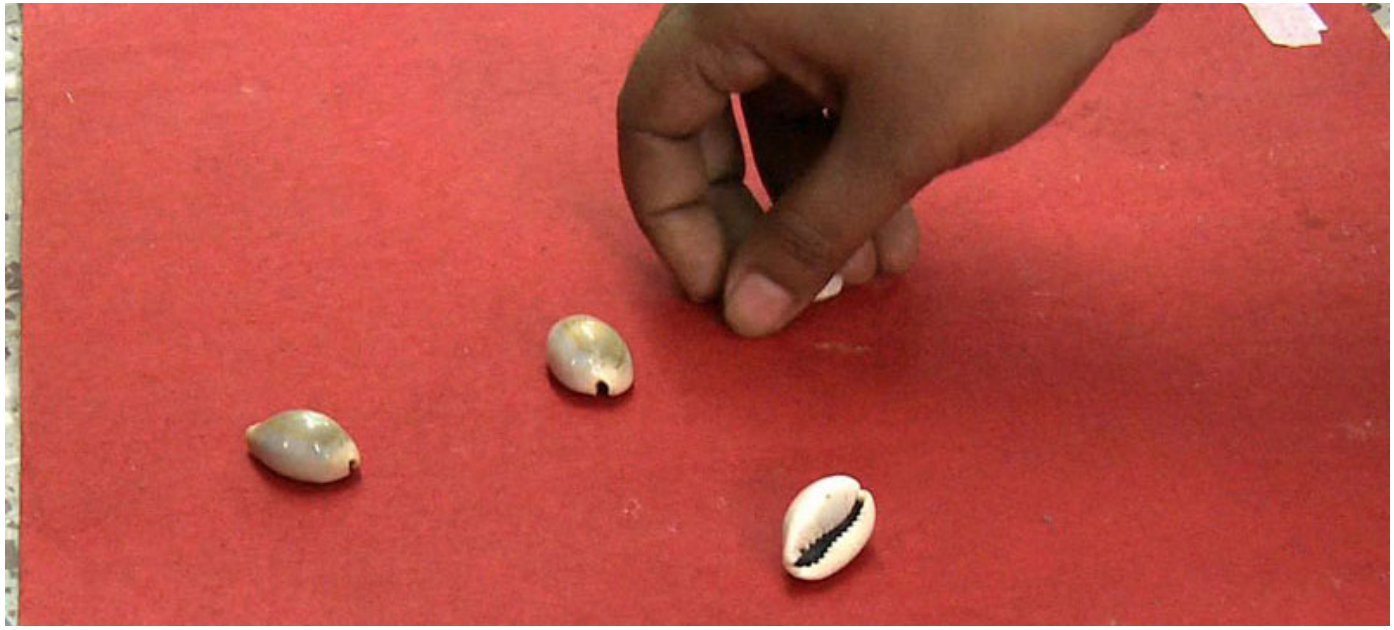
Conclusion:
This game helps the children in improving their hand-eye coordination and develop alertness. It teaches them to compete in a healthy environment. Above all, the game provides a scope for social interaction with people of varied age groups.





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January February

Introduction:
January February is a quick game played between two players facing each other. The game is popular with young children in the age group of 3 to 6 who have recently learnt the name of the months. Surprisingly, the children name the month only in English as the name suggests and not in Indian languages.

How to Play:
Player 1 put her/his arms out with the palm facing up. Player 2 stacks her/his hands with the palms facing upward on top of the other player's hands (as shown in the Image). Player 1 starts the game by saying the first month like 'January' and claps on Player 2's hand. Then the next player continues by clapping on Player 1's hand, naming the next month –' February.' The game continues with players naming the days and clapping on each other's hands: January, February, March and so on. In the last month i.e. December, when the player tries to clap the other player's hand, the other player has to save her hand from being clapped. If the hand gets clapped then the player hitting wins.

Variation:
The game is played in the same fashion with the name of the days like Sunday, Monday, Tuesday etc.

Conclusion:
This game helps to develop attention in children. The younger children learn the names and order of months and days. This game also provides a mode for social interaction with people of the same age group.

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Miss Mary Jab Choti Thi

Introduction:
Miss Mary Jab Choti Thi is a clapping game which is popular with girls in the age group of 4 to 8. It can be played by 2 or more players sitting in a circle. This game involves singing a song while clapping hands in a rhythmic pattern and acting out parts of the song.

How to Play:
Children gather in a circle to play this game. All children are equally involved at all times while playing this game by singing, clapping and acting. Children sing the song while clapping their hands in a rhythmic pattern and acting out while saying 'Aisi Thi Baba Aisi Thi.'

The song sung by the children while playing this game:
Miss Mary jab choti thi, kaisi thi baba kaisi thi?
Aisi thi baba aisi thi (Action: cradling a baby in the arms)

Miss Mary jab bari hui, kaisi thi baba kaisi thi?
Aisi this baba aisi thi (Action: writing on the pam with fingers)

Miss Mary jab college ko gai, kaisi thi baba kaisi thi?
Aisi thi baba aisi thi (Action: applying lipstick in front of a mirror)

Miss Mary ki jab shaadi hui, kaisi thi baba kaisi thi?
Aisi thi baba aisi thi (Action: Lift the veil from the head)

Miss Mary jab boodhi hui, kaisi thi baba kaisi thi?
Aisi thi baba aisi thi (Action: Old woman walking with stick)

Miss Marry jab margayi, kaisi thi baba kaisi thi?
Aisi thi baba aisi thi (Action: Lying like a dead corpse)

Miss Mary jab bhooth bani, kaisi thi baba kaisi thi?
Aisi thi baba aisi thi? (Action: making a scary face and shouting boooo)

Variations:
Various variations in the clapping pattern are introduced in the game to suit the age group. The actions differ from place to place and depend solely on the group playing the game.

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Indian Games

Culture of Play

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/indian-games/indoor-games/miss-mary-jab-choti-thi

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Conclusion:
Children learn to understand patterns and rhythms while playing this game. This game provides a platform for social interaction among children while having fun. Children of mixed age groups can easily adapt to each other in playing this game.

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Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/indian-games/indoor-games/pacheta

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Pacheta

Introduction:
Pacheta (5 stone game) is a popular game among girls and women aged 6 and above. Children are seen playing this game in a small groups of 2 to 4 players. This game requires five stones/pebbles which are sometimes painted by players. In Rajasthan, these stones are made of lac in bright colors. Pacheta goes by many different names and the rules vary to suit the age levels.

How to Play:
The game of *Pacheta* involves throwing stones up in the air and catching them. It is played in various levels which are sequential and predetermined by the players to suit the age levels. The steps consist of tossing up one stone at a time, and picking up one or more from the ground while the tossed stone is in the air. The advanced version consists in tossing up two stones, then three and so on, and catching them on the back of the hand. The player has to forfeit their turn to the next player in case they have missed catching the stones. This player continues to play the game in his turn in the level discontinued. The winner of the game is the first one that finishes all the levels of the game.

Conclusion:
This is a great game to develop fine motor skills, and hand-eye coordination in children. Balancing skills are also developed. The younger children also learn counting in this process.

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Source:
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Raja, Mantri, Chor, Sipahi

Introduction:
Raja, Mantri, Chor, Sipahi (King, Minister, Thief and Police) is a wonderful four-people guessing game is where the 'Mantri' has to identify the 'Chor.' This is a popular indoor game played by 6 to 12-year-olds.

How to Play:
The game begins with making 4 chits namely Raja (1000 *points*), Mantri (500 *points*), Chor(0 points) and Sipahi (300 points). Each chit is folded and the 4 players are asked to pick one chit. Players open their chit to find out their character. The Raja exclaims "Mera Mantri Kaun Hai?" meaning 'Who is my Minister?' The Mantri then has to identify the 'Chor' from the other 2 remaining players. If the *Mantri* guesses correctly then the points are retained or else he/she surrenders them to the Chor. Several rounds of this game are played before counting the points. The player with the highest score wins the game.

Variation:
An extension of this game is seen when played in larger groups. New characters are added to accommodate more players. The players predetermine the character that will have to be identified, and also the characters that would have to be revealed at the beginning of the game. The guessing game is similar to what is played with 4 people but older children increase the difficulty level of this game by including more unrevealed characters thereby making it difficult to guess.

Conclusion:
The game enhances face reading skills and helps develop cognitive thinking by requiring deductive reasoning. This entertaining game can be learned quickly and is a tool to make new friends. This game provides a platform for social interaction and enhances communication skills.

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We are the Captains

Introduction:
We are the Captains is an exciting, quick, two people game introduced fairly recently in the dictionary of games. This game is mostly popular in urban India and is played by children in the age group of 5 to 10 years olds. In the villages of India, children play the same game with modified words to suit their local language.

How to Play:
Two players sit facing each other holding hands as shown in the image below to start the game. The game begins by reciting: 'We are the captains, quick quick, very quick,' and proceeds with one player asking 'names of' the player. The next players can name anything for example '*animals, prime ministers, fruits,* etc. The game continues with the other player filling the category by saying aloud names belonging to this category. If a player is unable to add a name to the category, they can request to change the category by saying 'Please change (pause) names of' and the other player in turn names a category to continue the game. If the player is unable to name a category, the decision is put back to the first player by saying 'You change (pause) names of' and the game continues till players decide to wind up the game.

Conclusion:
This game helps to develop attention, communication and general knowledge of things and their categories. This game can be easily played without any prior setup and helps children in making friends with new people in similar age groups.

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Outdoor Games

Aankh Micholi

Doctor Doctor Help us

Gilli Danda

Kabaddi

Kho Kho

Kokla Chappaki

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Lagori

Marbles

Oonch Neech Ka Papda

Posham Pa

Stapoo

Vish Amrit

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Aankh Micholi

Introduction:
Aankh Micholi is a popular group outdoor game enjoyed by children aged 5 to 12. The boys and the girls actively participate in playing this group game.

How to Play:
One of the players, the denner, is blindfolded with a piece of cloth. The denner has to catch hold of one of the other players while being blindfolded. All other players scatter around in the open space and avoid the denner so that they do not get caught. The players are allowed to make sounds for the denner to give hints for the direction. The denner's turn comes to an end as soon as he/she is able to catch one of the players. This player now becomes the denner for the next turn and the game continues till all players decide unanimously to end the game.

Variation:
In some variants of this game, once the denner catches another player, he/she also has to identify the other player correctly. Unless correctly identified, he/she continues to be the denner in the game and the game continues.

Conclusion:
This game helps in developing sensory skills, alertness, and a sense of sound in the players. The denner or the blindfolded player has to make the judgment of space based on his hearing abilities. This helps the denner in developing his/her skill to be alert at all times and have a sense of sound. This game also helps in developing tactile senses.

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Doctor Doctor Help us

Introduction:
Doctor Doctor Help Us is a comparatively new game in the encyclopedia of games played in India that involves a lot of confusion and physical movement. The game is much enjoyed by children of varied age groups of 4 to 12 years old. This game requires a minimum of 4 players and is more enjoyable with a larger group of 6 or more players.

How to Play:
One child acts as a denner/doctor and sits away from the other players facing backwards with their eyes closed and counts slowly till ten. Meantime the other players hold hands forming a circle and getting entangled in multiple ways to create complex loop. They then call the doctor by shouting out loud "Doctor Doctor Help Us." The doctor comes and tries to disentangle the structure to get them back to form a circle holding hands. During the play lot of noise is created as the doctor at times complicates the structure than resolving it resulting into hands of the players twisting and turning in all directions. Once the puzzle is solved the players run away from the doctor. The players are chased by the doctor and the first player caught in this process of catching becomes the next 'doctor.' The game continues to be played in the same manner.

Conclusion:
The game builds interaction between players as they become one entity and try confusing the *denner/doctor* with their tricks. It helps players to understand the minds of the other participants and teaches them to work together towards a common goal. It hones child's ability to strategize and lead.

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Gilli Danda

Introduction:
Gilli Danda is a game played by a group of minimum 4 boys aged 8 years and above. It is a popular game in all parts of rural India with variations in name and scoring method. This game is precursor to the game of cricket where the ball is replaced with *Gilli*. *Gilli Danda* is known by different names in different parts of India. In Tamil, it is known as *Kitti Pul*, in Bengali as *Danguli*, in Kannada as *Chinni Dandu*, in Marathis as *Viti Dandu*, in Telegu as *Gooti Billa* etc.

How to Play:
The players are divided in two teams to play this game – the hitter team and the opponent team. To play this game, one needs a long stick named as *danda*, and a short stick with tapered ends, generally known as *gilli*. The *danda* is used to flick the short *gilli* into the air, and hit again to make it travel to a maximum distance. In case the hitter is unable to flick the *gilli*, their turn gets over after three chances. The hitter's score is measured by the distance from the place where he hit the *gilli* and the place it landed, measured by the danda. The opposing team has to try and catch the *gilli* while it is up in the air. If the opposing team catches the *gilli*, then the hitter ends his turn.

Conclusion:
Gilli Danda helps in improving hand eye coordination. It also fosters healthy competitive spirit and builds concentration power. Above all, it provides a mode of interaction with children in a similar age group.

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Kabaddi

Introduction:
Kabaddi is a team sport played in open grounds in all parts of India. It is known by various names like Chedugudu or *Hu-Tu-Tu* in southern parts of India, Hadudu (Men) and *Chu-Kit-Kit* (women) in eastern India, and Kabaddi in northern India. The word 'Kabaddi' in Hindi means 'holding your breath', which is the supreme skill that underlies the game.

Kabbadi is one of the games played at national level by both boys and girls. Today this sport is played in more than twenty countries other than India including Bangladesh, Nepal, China, Japan, Canada, Sri Lanka, Russia, Nigeria, USA, Brazil, Indonesia, Germany, United Kingdom and Pakistan amongst others.

How to Play:
To play the game of Kabbadi, two teams with 7 players each from each team take positions on a rectangular court with a center line dividing the two teams. Each team stands behind their respective lines inside the court in a straight line. The game begins with one of the players, from a team entering the opponent's side of the court continuously murmuring "Kabaddi Kabaddi" in one breath. The aim is to touch maximum number of players on the opposing side, and return back to his court without losing that breath. The members who were touched will be out. The aim of the opposing team is to hold this player and not let him/her reach their court or touch the center line until they take another breath. If opponent team succeeds in doing this then the player will be declared out. The game continues by each team sending one player alternatively into the opponents' court. After the long play, the team left with players on the court wins the game.

Conclusion:
The game of Kabaddi helps in developing strategy, strength and skills to work in teams. It also develops confidence, concentration and tolerance in players. This game also provides an opportunity for healthy competition among equal players and helps them make friends.

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Kho Kho

Introduction:
Kho Kho is a popular traditional sport in India. In ancient times, Kho-Kho was played on '*raths*' or chariots, and was known as *Rathera*. This game originated in the state of Maharashtra and for many years, was played informally until the Deccan Gymkhana Club of Poona formalized the game to make it more popular.

Like all other games, this game is simple, inexpensive and enjoyable. All one requires in this game is an even rectangular court measuring 29 meters by 16 meters and 2 poles. Two teams of 12 players each are formed. However, only nine players with 9 players enter the court and 3 are kept on reserve. While playing this game on the streets, children vary the number of players in each team depending on availability. The aim of the game is to tag all the opponents in the shortest time possible; the quickest team is declared the winner.

How to Play:
The game is played in 2 innings and each inning consists of chasing and running turns of 7 minutes each. 8 members of the "chasing" team take position in their eight squares on the central line, alternately facing the opposite directions. Two wooden poles stand at either end of this central line. The ninth player is the 'chaser,' and he takes his position next to one of the two poles, ready to begin the pursuit. Now defenders enter the limit, in batches of three. All the action in Kho-Kho is provided by the defenders who try to play out the 7 minutes time, and the chasers who try to dismiss them. An 'active chaser' can change position with a 'seated chaser,' by touching him from behind, and uttering the word "'kho" loudly. A defender can be dismissed in three ways: 1) if one is touched by an active chaser's palm without committing a foul, 2) if one goes out of the limits 3) if one enters the limit late. After the first set of 3 defenders is caught, the next batch of 3 is sent onto the field. At the end of the innings, there is an interval of 5 minutes and an interval of 2 minutes, in between the turns. Each side alternates between chasing and defence.

Conclusion:
This game helps in building physical fitness, strength, speed and stamina. It also develops qualities such as obedience, discipline, sportsmanship, and loyalty between team members. The game is interesting because the position of the players sitting is dynamic; one will never find the same sequence of players sitting in the same order as when the game starts.

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Indian Games

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by
Seema Periwal and Prof. Ravi Poovaiah
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://dsource.in/resource/indian-games/outdoor-games/kho-kho

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Kokla Chappaki

Introduction:
Kokla Chappakki is a traditional game played in the streets of Punjab. This game is more popular with young girls aged 4 -8. The number of players varies depending upon availability. As in almost most traditional games, not much equipment is required other than a small piece of cloth.

This game has been adopted by children in other parts of India with slight modifications and different names like 'Ghodha Chamar Khai' etc

How to Play:
All players sit cross-legged in a circle except one, the "seeker." The 'seeker' takes the piece of cloth and runs around the circle singing the phrase "Kokla Chapaki Jumeraat aayi aye jera agge pichey wekhey ohdi shamat aayi aye." The phrase means "Kokla Chapaki it is Thursday today, whoever looks here and there, shall be punished." The seeker stealthily drops the cloth behind one of the players sitting in the circle and keeps circling and singing. The players sitting in the circle have to be alert at all times and should be able to realize that the piece of cloth has been dropped behind them. That player then picks it up and chases seeker who races around the circle and tries to capture the other person's space without getting tagged. If tagged, the seeker remains the seeker and the game continues. Otherwise, the other player now becomes the seeker and the game continues.

Conclusion:
This game helps in improving not only running skills but observation skills. The children sitting in circle have to be alert at all times observing the movements of the seeker. This game is fun to play and provides an opportunity for socializing among the children.

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Lagori

Introduction:
Lagori/Pithoo is a high energy outdoor team game that is widely played in most parts of the country by both rural and urban children. This game is more common with young boys aged 5 and above. Other commonly known names for this game are Lagori, Sitoliya, Saat Patha, Lingocha, Ezhu Kallu, Dabba Kal, etc.

How to Play:
The game is played between two teams - the seeker and the hitter, with at least 3 players in each team. It is played with a set of 7 to 11 flat and light stones and a softball. The flat stones of varied sizes are stacked up on each other in ascending order with smallest on top, in the center of a small circle.

The two teams stand on either side of the diagonal of the circle at least a meter away from the circle. Members of Seeker team get three chances each to dislodge the stone pile using the ball. If one fails, next member comes in and gets his chance. When all the members of Seeker team fail to hit the stones, the ball is given to the opposite team. The fun starts when someone from the Seeker team scatters the stones by hitting with the ball. At this point, aim of Seeker team is to restack the stone-pile back pile before the Hitter team hits any of the Seeker team members with the ball. If a player is hit before the pile is complete, the entire team is out and the teams reverse roles. This continues for a specified length of time. The team which has restored more piles wins.

Conclusion:
This game develops aiming skills and strategy building skills in children. It hones the team building spirit in the players. Children also learn to compete in a healthy environment while learning important values of friendship and leadership. This game also provides a platform for social interaction among children.

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Marbles

Introduction:
Kanche/ Marbles is one of the most popular Indian games played all over the country in India mostly by boys. It appeals to people of all ages. It is known as Kanchey in the North and Golli Gundu in the South. There are various different games played all around the country with marbles.

How to Play:
There are various games played using marbles. In one of the popular games with marbles, a circle measuring approximately 2-3 feet in diameter is drawn in the ground using a stick or a stone. Each player contributes 2 marbles each to begin the game. All the marbles are collected at the centre of the circle. To decide the turns for the players, a line is drawn approximately three feet away from the hole. The players stand at the second line and try to throw their marbles into the hole. The person whose marble is closest to the hole gets to play first followed by the second closest and so on.

To play the game, the players take turns shooting the marbles. The player shoots by holding the marble tautly in the forefinger of the left hand, then stretching the finger back like a bow-string by the pressure of the forefinger of the right hand and finally by releasing the finger such that the marble flies forward. At all times, the left thumb should firmly touch the ground. The players take turns to knocking marbles out of the circle. They get to keep the marbles that were knocked out of the circle. The game ends when there are no marbles left in the circle. The player with the highest number of marbles wins the game.

Variation:
In a variation of the above game, once the marbles are collected in the centre of the circle, the other players select the marble to be hit. If the player manages to hit the desired marble, he wins all the remaining marbles in the circle. The game continues in a similar manner with the other players.

Conclusion:
The game of marbles helps players to develop mathematical skills and motor skills while improving concentration, hand eye coordination and aiming/targeting skills. It also provides an opportunity to socialize and have fun and nurtures healthy competition.

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Oonch Neech Ka Papda

Introduction:
Oonch Neech ka Papda game is a popular group game played by young children aged 3-8 years old in uneven open spaces. Oonch means a surface which is comparatively higher and Neech means a lower surface. This game is known by different names in different regions – in West Bengal, it is known as *Kumir Daanga*, in Andhra Pradesh it is called *Nela Banda*, and in some places, it is simply called *Oonch Neech*.

How to Play:
Children need an uneven surface to play this game. The lower surface is called neech and the higher surface is called *oonch*. One player is chosen as the *denner*. The other players shout out "*oonch neech ka papda, oonch maangi neech*." Here, the *denner* is being asked whether he chooses Oonch or Neech. If the denner chooses oonch then other players quickly move to the lower levels and vice versa. The *denner* has to now catch the players who are in his preferred area. The players have to keep moving and cannot be in the same position for more than a specified time. The player who is caught by the *denner* becomes the next denner and the game continues.

Conclusion:
The game of *Oonch Neech Ka Papada* provides a platform for social interaction among children of the same age group and encourages them to work in teams. While children are having fun in the game, they also learn to be more alert and confident.

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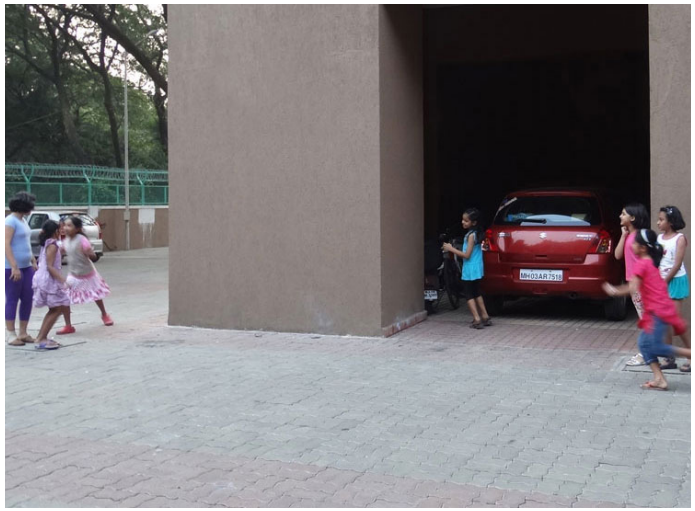

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Posham Pa

Introduction:
Posham Pa is an outdoor game played with 3 or more players. This game is more commonly played in rural India by 4 to 8 year old.

How to Play:
Two players make a gate like structure by joining their hands and holding it high up together. These players sing the song while others pass through the gate by running around the players in a line. Once the song finishes the players close the gate and one of the players is caught inside the gate. The game ends when all the children have been caught at the gate.

Variation:
The game is played with an extension in certain regions. In the longer version of the game, the player who is caught in the gate is asked a question secretly with two options and accordingly it is decided which team he/she joins. Once all the players are caught one by one there are two teams formed. With a skipping rope in between the teams try to pull each other. The team which is able to pull all opposite team members towards them wins.

Song:
Poshampa bhai poshampa (singing with hands acting as gates)
Lal quiley me kya hua
Sau rupaye ki ghadi churai
Ab toh jail mein aana padega
Jail ki roti khani padegi
Jail ka paani peena padega
Ab toh jail me aana padega! (Close the gates and try catch a player)

Conclusion:
This game develops pattern building in children while they walk to a rhythmic song. It offers good social interaction with children. The extension part of this game tests strength and decision making in children.

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Stapoo

Introduction:
Stapoo is a popular outdoor game played widely by girls across regions. It is commonly played by girls in the age group of 6 to 12. The game can be played by any number of players taking turns in a pre-defined sequence. Commonly 3 - 5 players are involved. If the number of people is large, more grids are drawn. This game is known by various names like *Tikkar Billa* in North, *Chhipri* in Maharashtra, *Kith Kith* in West Bengal, etc.

How to Play:
The players need a small flat stone and a flat ground on which the grid can be drawn. The grid is drawn on the ground either with chalk or using a stick on sand. Squares are drawn within the grid and are numbered in a sequence in which they are to be hopped. The pattern of the grid varies from place to place.

The player starts the game by throwing a stone inside the first square. The stone must land within the confines of the square. The player hops through the court, landing on one foot in single squares and both feet in double squares. At the end of the course, the player turns around and moves back to the beginning, stopping to pick up the stone on the way back. If the player successfully finishes the course, he or she throws the stone into the second square and repeats the exercise. The player loses a chance to play every time he or she is unable to throw the stone within the designated area of the square, or if they lose balance. She/he will start in their turn from where they had stopped in his last turn. The first player to move the stone through the entire grid wins the game.

Variation:
This game is played in different regions with variations in the rules as well as the grid that is drawn.

In some regions, the game is extended by the players by trying to capture the squares to build 'houses' on the squares. After completing the entire course of the grid, the player stands with their back towards the rectangle and they throw the stone over their head. The square where the stone rests is declared to be their 'house.' They write their names which means they own that number and they can hop in those boxes with both their feet. Whereas, the others have to skip that box and make long jumps to hop to the next one. Now, for this player, the game is played from the other end so the player starts from number 8 till number 1. The player, who captures maximum number of houses, wins.

Conclusion:
This traditional game helps to improve balance, coordination, and strength in children. It also imparts social skills for dispute resolution, negotiations and coordination.

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Vish Amrit

Introduction:
Vish Amrit is a childhood favorite game played in many parts of the country by children aged 3-12 years old. In Sanskrit, *Vish* means 'poison' and *Amrit* means '*Nectar*.' It is a popular chasing game played in large groups. In cities, due to the Western influences, this game is also known as Lock and Key.

How to Play:
In this game, one person is chosen as the denner. The denner chases the other players and gives them *Vish* by touching them and saying aloud *Vish*. As soon as *Vish* is given to a player, this player freezes in his position until his other teammate comes and set him/her free by giving *Amrit*. *Amrit* is given by touching the stationary player and shouting out Amrit. The game continues till all the players are given *Vish* by the *denner* and no one is left to give *Amrit*.

Conclusion:
This game is a fun game providing children with a platform to socialize and interact with children of mixed age groups. Playing this game helps children to build up their physical strength while developing their sense of distance and space.

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Indian Games

Culture of Play

by
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IDC, IIT Bombay

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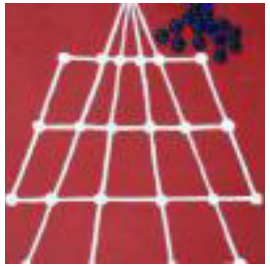

Adu Puli Attam

Carrom

Chauka Bara

Chinese Checkers

Ludo

Moksha Patam

Pallankuzi

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Adu Puli Attam

Introduction:
Aadu Puli Aatam literally translates to 'Goats Tigers Game' in Tamil. It is also known as *Puli Joodam* in Andhra Pradesh and *Huli Gatta* in Karnataka. This game is a turn-based, strategic, two-player (or 2 teams) board game that is played in South India. The tigers 'hunt' the goats and the goats attempt to block the movement of the tigers. The objective of the tiger is to hunt 5 or more goats and that of the goats is to surround and immobilize all three tigers.

How to Play:
A board with game chart as shown in the images below, 3 *Pulli's* (tigers) and 15 *Aadu's* (goats) are required to begin the plan. There are 23 intersection spots on the board for moving the *aadu* and *puli* pieces. The *puli* pieces are bigger than the *Aadu* pieces. To set the game, the *puli* pieces and *Aadu* pieces are arranged on the board. One pulli is placed on the apex and the other 2 are placed in the inner positions closest to the apex. All the *Aadus* start off the board.

Aadus can move only after all 15 have been put on the board. The *Pulis* start capturing one *Aadu* at a time in a turn, as soon as the game begins by jumping over to an adjacent free position. The *Aadus* leave the board as soon as they are captured. The *Pulis* win if 5 or more *Aadus* are captured and the *Aadus* win if they have blocked the movement of the *Pulis*.

Conclusion:
This game helps to build strategy and the concept of teamwork by teaching that even though one is small and weak, they together can defeat the stronger if united as a team. It provides the opportunity to socialize and compete in a healthy manner. Playing *Aadu Puli Aatam* helps to stimulate the brain into thinking thereby improving logical reasoning and problem solving strategies.

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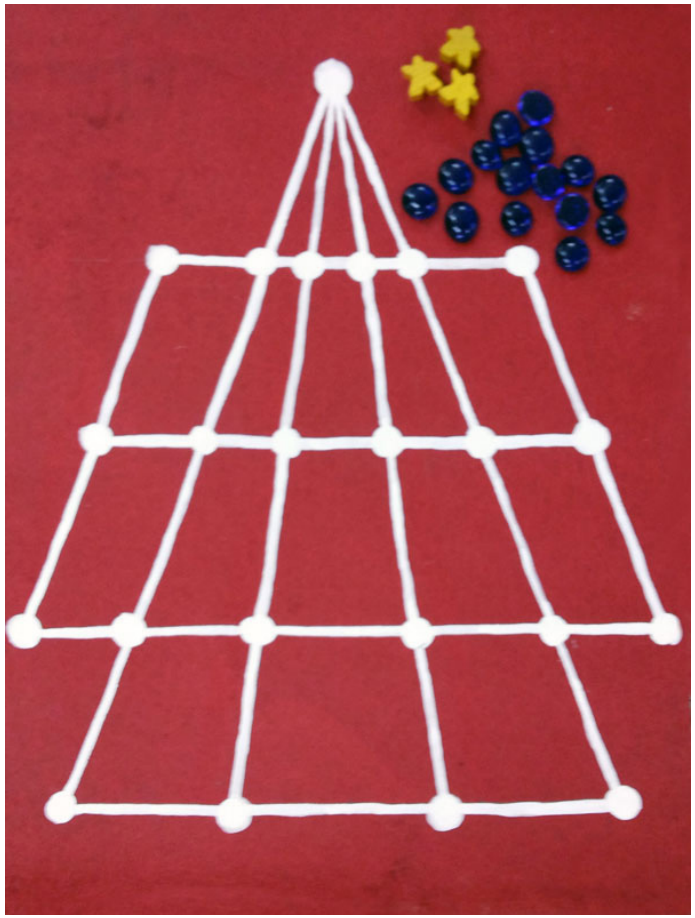

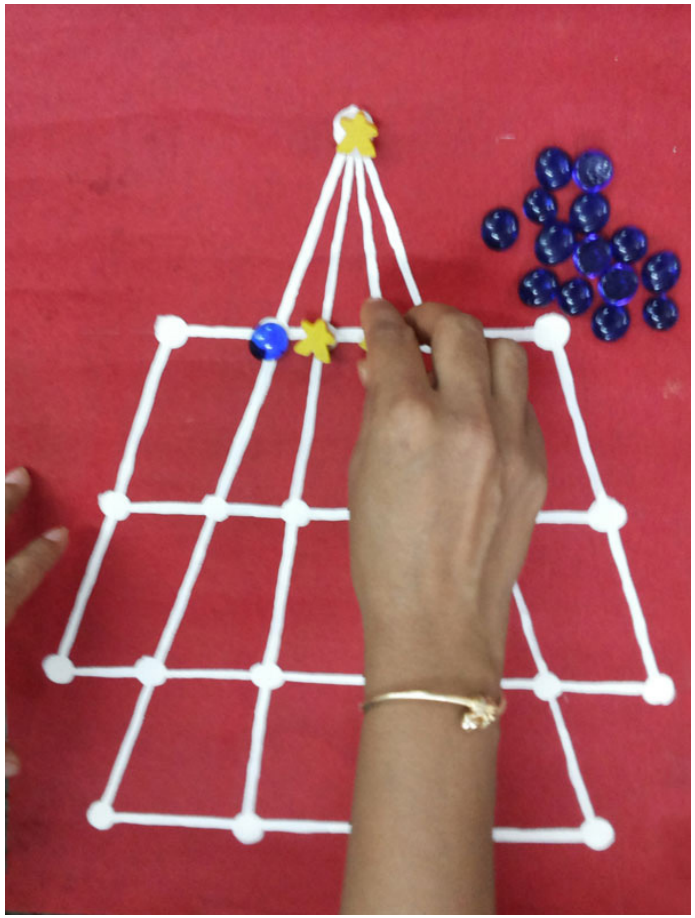

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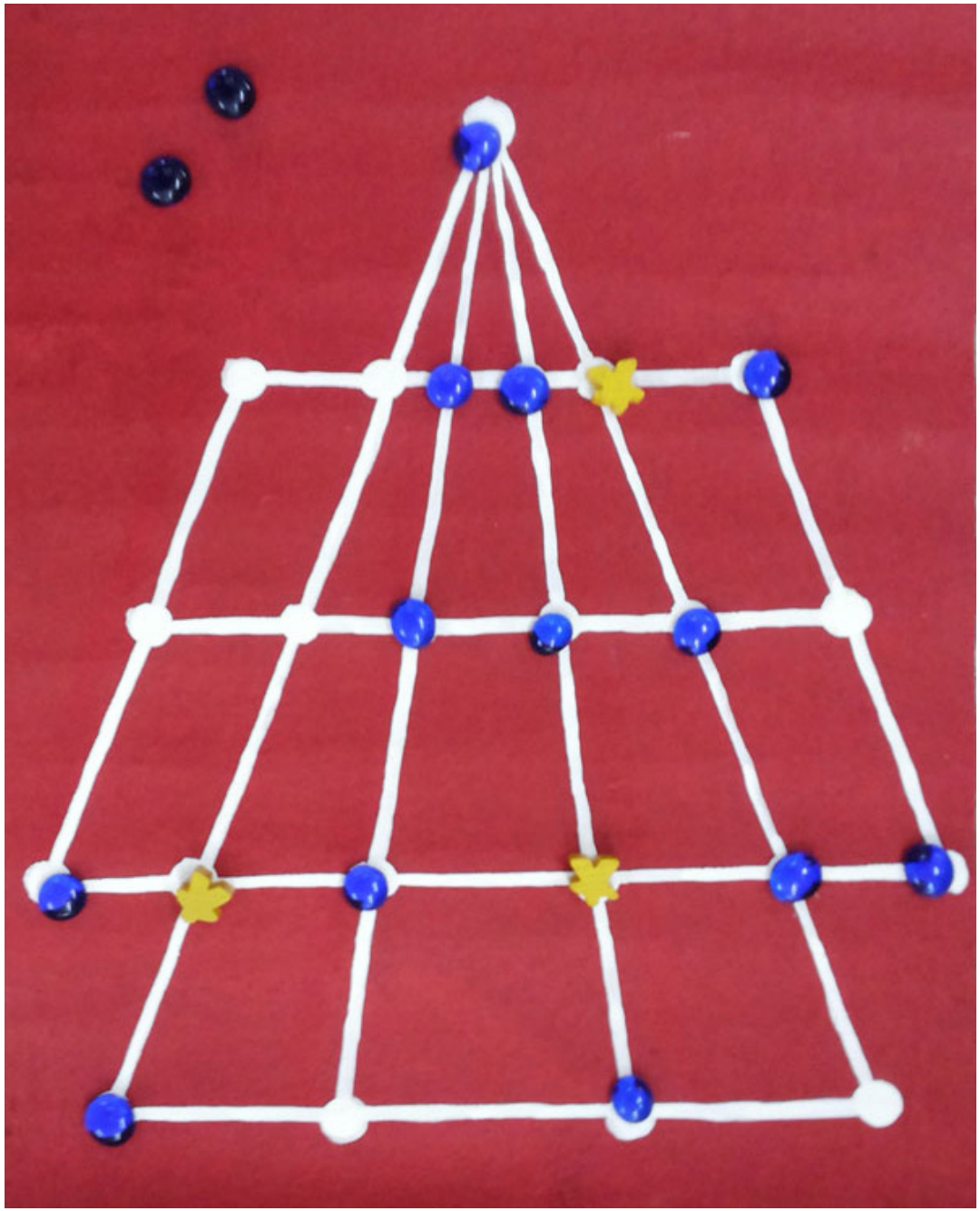

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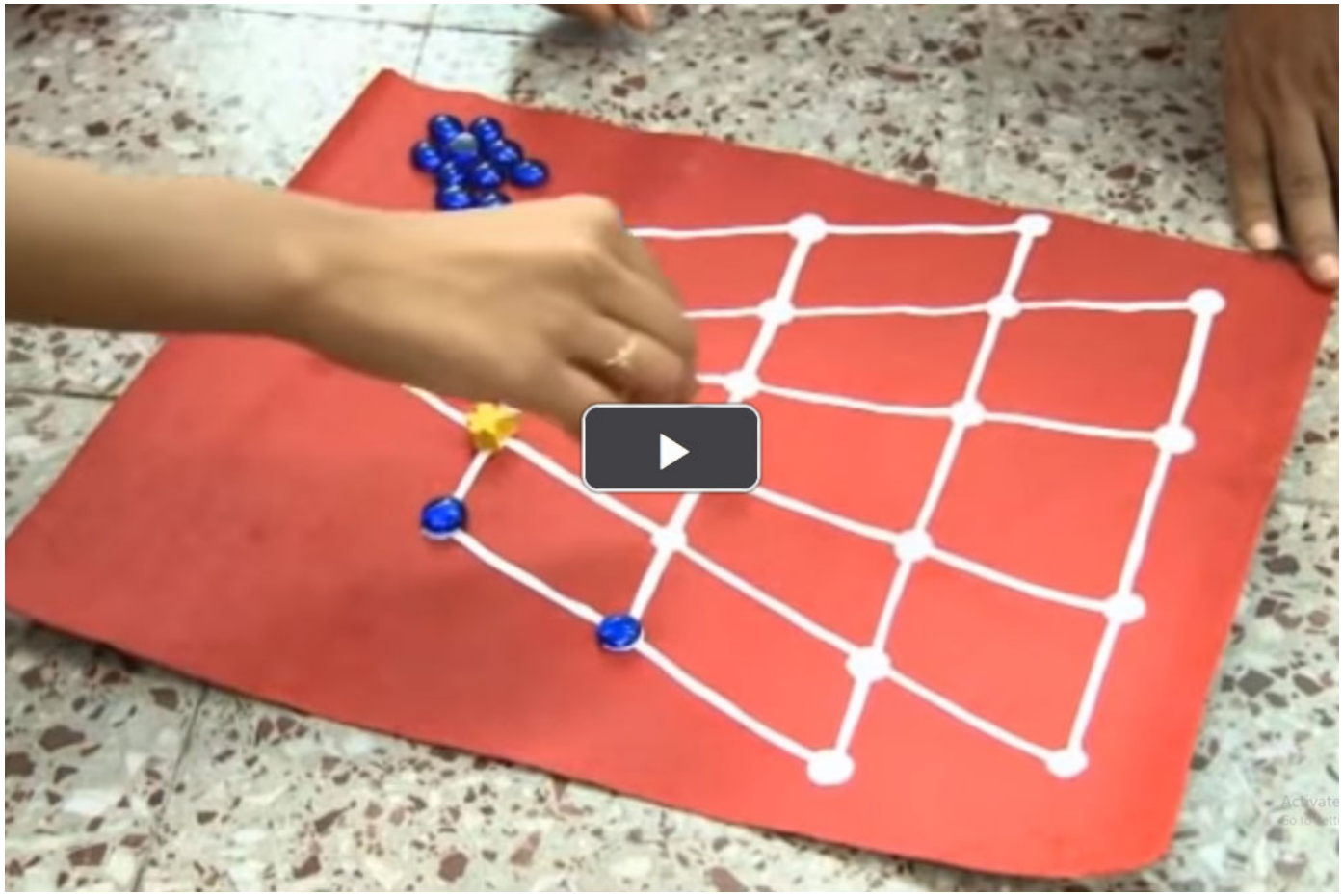

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Carrom

Introduction:
Carrom is a 2-4 people game played on a smooth wooden board with 4 pockets. It is very popular in all parts of India and multiple variations of the game are played to suit the age of the players and the time available. *Carrom* is now played widely across the globe. Various tournaments are played all year around.

How to Play:
The *carrom* board is a square board with 4 pockets on the 4 corners of the board. A baseline from which players make their shots are drawn on the board. The game is played using wooden/acrylic discs like coins also known as *Goti*. There are 19 *gotis* – 9 black, 9 white and 1 red. The red goti is known as the queen and carries more points than others. The goal of the game is to sink the gotis in the pockets using a bigger acrylic disc known as *striker*. The gotis are worth some points and the player with the maximum points/score is declared the winner.

To play the game, the players first set up all the gotis at the centre of the Carrom Board. They then start taking shots, gently sliding the *gotis* in the pockets with the help of the *striker*. The red goti or the queen can be pocketed anytime after sinking the first piece but must also sink another piece subsequently to cover the queen. If the players fail to cover the queen, the queen is returned back to the centre of the carom board. The player's turn continues as long as one keeps sinking the *gotis* in the pockets. If a player, sinks the striker by mistake, a penalty of 1 *goti* is charged. The winner of the game is the player with the maximum score.

Conclusion:
A great deal of hand-eye coordination is needed in order to play a game of carrom. It also requires practice and determination. This is a popular family game that creates bonding with people of all ages. This game enhances skills like counting and visual perception in children.

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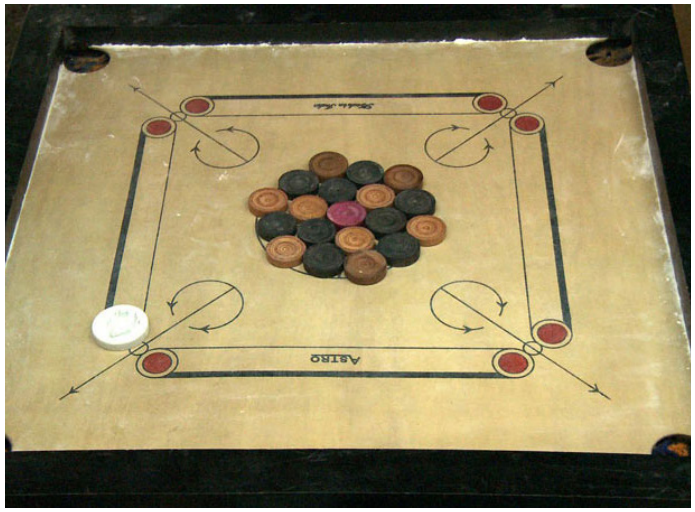

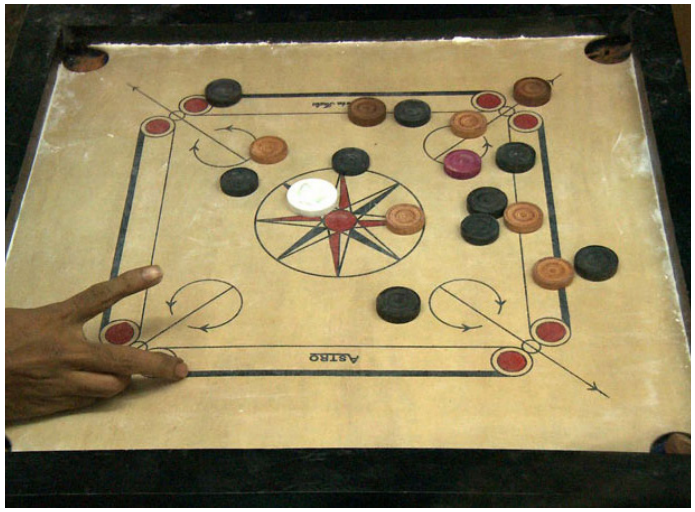

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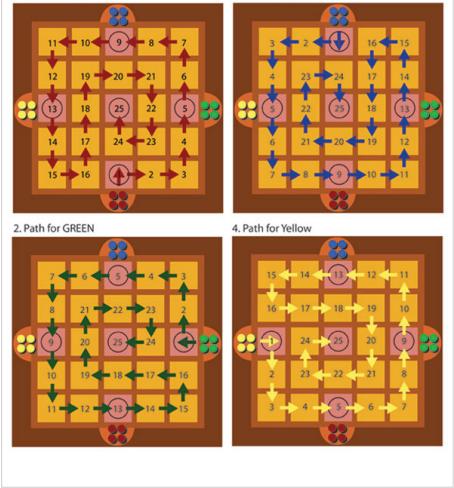
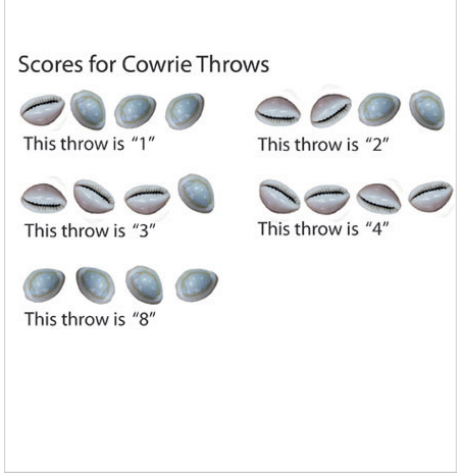
Chauka Bara

Introduction:
Chauka Bara is a traditional board game played during the era of the kings. The game is 2 to 4 player game, played on a 5x5 square board of cells. It is known by various other names like *Katte Mane* in Kannada, *Pakidakal* or *Kavidi Kali* in Malayalam, *Ashta Chamma* in Telugu, *Daayam* or *Thaayam* in Tamil, and Kanna Duaa in Hindi. This game is mostly popular in South India. It belongs to the Parcheesi family and is said to be a precursor to the modern day Ludo. Nowadays, few people play this game but many organizations are working towards reviving this traditional game.

How to Play:
The game of *Chauka Bara* is played on a 5x5 square board of cells as in Fig. 1: Chauka Bara Board. The middle most square along each edge and the square in the center of the board are safe places where pawns cannot be attacked. Each player owns 4 pawns. The movement of the pawns is determined by the throw of 4 *cowries*. On a turn, the player throws four *cowries* and moves the pawns up the spiral path 1- 8 places according to the result of the throw. The path followed by red and blue pawns color is depicted in Fig. 2. Other colored pawns follow similar suit. The score on the throw of cowries is shown in Fig. 3. If the player's pawn lands on a space occupied by the opponent, the opponent's pawn is 'attacked' and returned to the starting space. Once a player has been able to attack an opponent's pawn, their pawns are permitted to move inside the inner ring. The first player to move all of their pawns to the innermost square wins.





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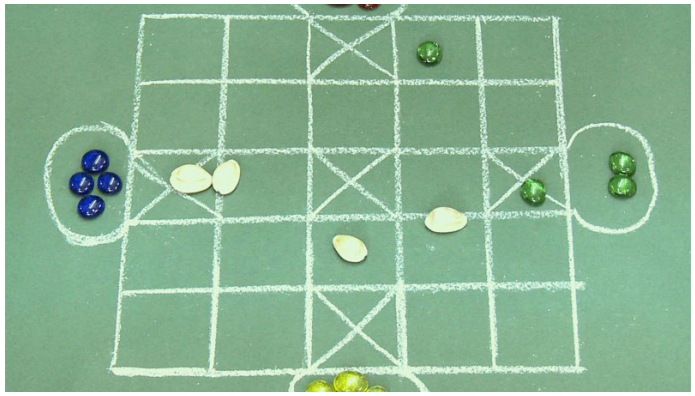
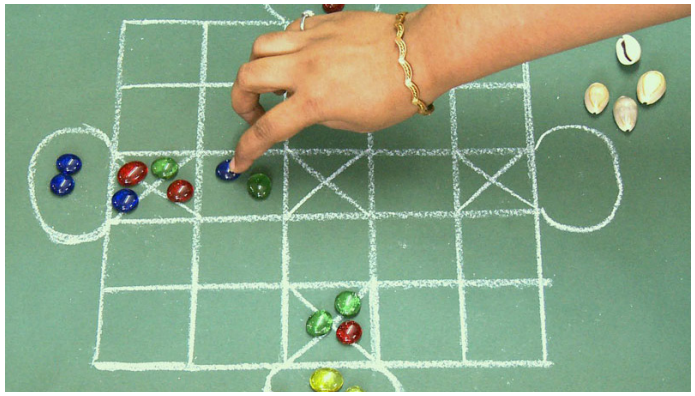
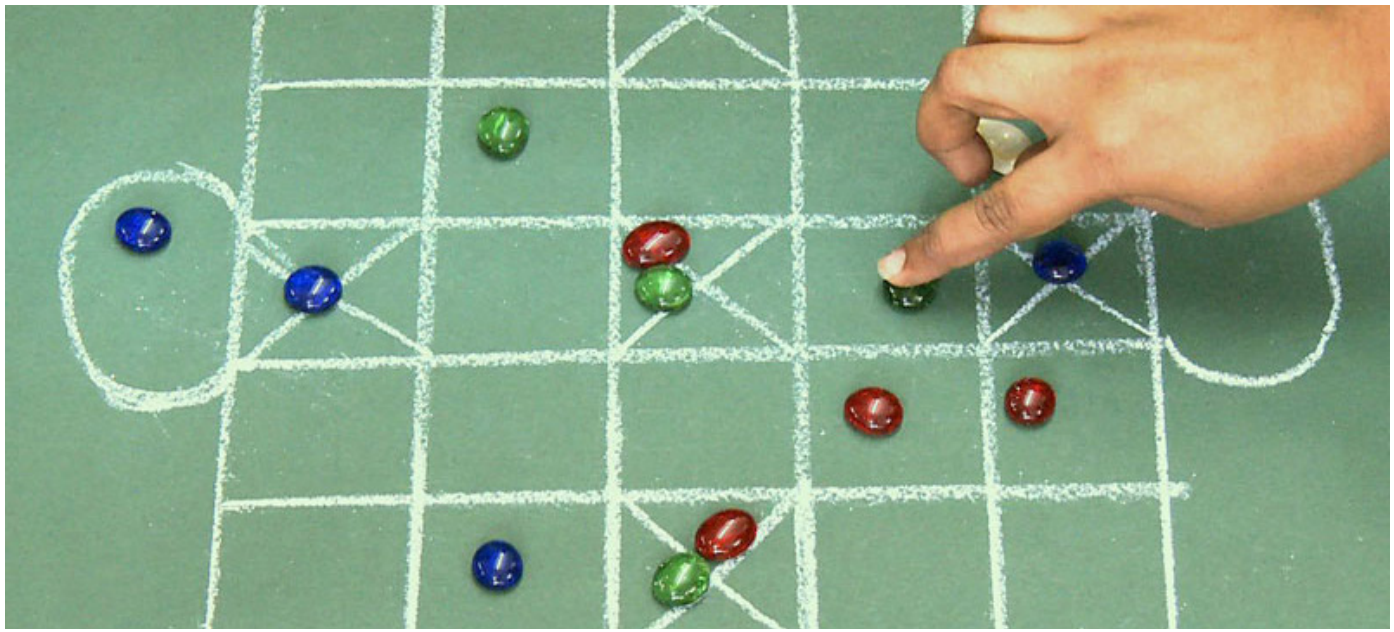
Variation:
Ashta Kashte is a similar game played in rural West Bengal. This game is very similar to Chauka Bara except that the size of the board is a 7 by 7 board of cells. The rules of the game are exactly similar to Chauka Bara.

Conclusion:
The game creates an opportunity for interaction among the players. Young players learn to count and hone their strategizing and decision making skills. Children learn to plan their moves and learn to be patient as they wait to take their turns. Children learn to plan their moves and learn the concepts.







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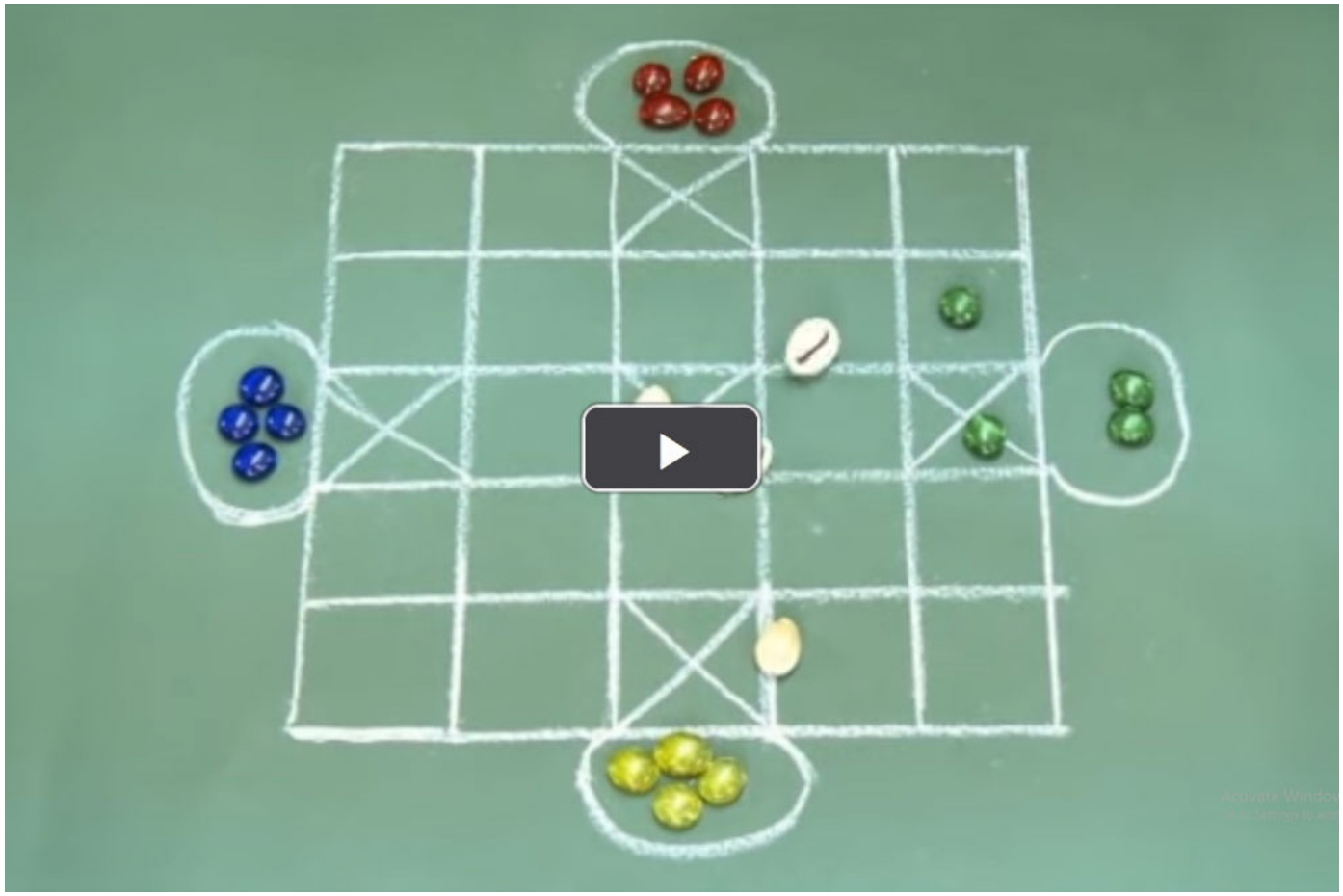

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Chinese Checkers

Introduction

Chinese Checkers is a strategy board game played by 2 – 6 players and is best enjoyed by kids aged 7 years and above. This game was invented in Germany as *Halma*, and later, the simplified version was named as *Chinese Checkers* in the United States. However, many historians dispute the fact that the game originated in Germany and believe that it originated in the United States itself. Nevertheless, though this game did not originate in India, it is widely played by urban Indian kids since generations.

How to Play

The Chinese Checker board is in the shape of a six-pointed star. Each point of the star is an equilateral triangle consisting of ten holes (four holes on each side). Each triangle is of a different colour and there are six sets of ten marbles/pegs with corresponding colours of the triangle. The interior of the board is a hexagon with five holes on each side. The whole star-shaped board is filled with holes each connected with straight lines to its adjacent holes. The objective of the game is to be the first player to move all 10 pegs across the opposite triangle by jumping over other pieces. The destination triangle is called 'home.'

To play the game, each player decides a color. He/She arranges all 10 pegs in the holes of the corresponding triangle. The youngest player usually begins the game and the other players take their turns in a clockwise direction. In a turn, players move a single peg of their color to its adjacent hole or jump over any peg to a vacant hole directly beyond it. The player may choose not to jump over certain pegs even if he/she has the choice and can bring his/her turn to the end.

The players strategize to build a long hopping path from their starting point to their home. Other players can block these paths by placing their pegs and hindering the movement of another player along these paths.

Conclusion

The game of Chinese Checkers is a great entertaining game that provides space for social interaction while developing logic skills and critical thinking skills in children. In this game, kids also learn to strategize, plan and compete in a healthy way.

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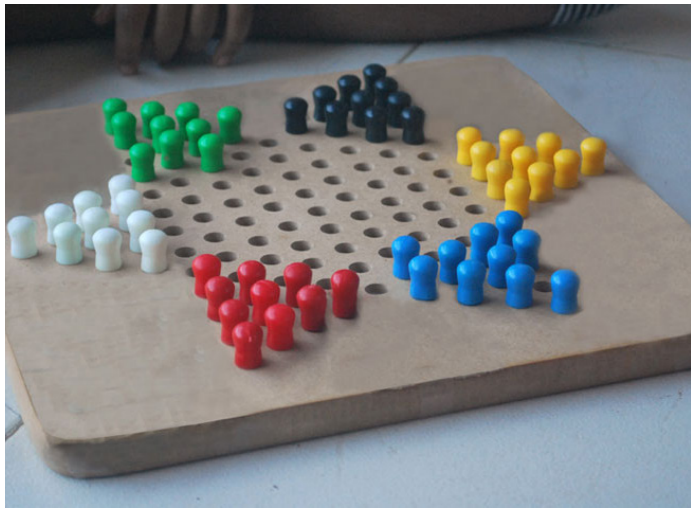

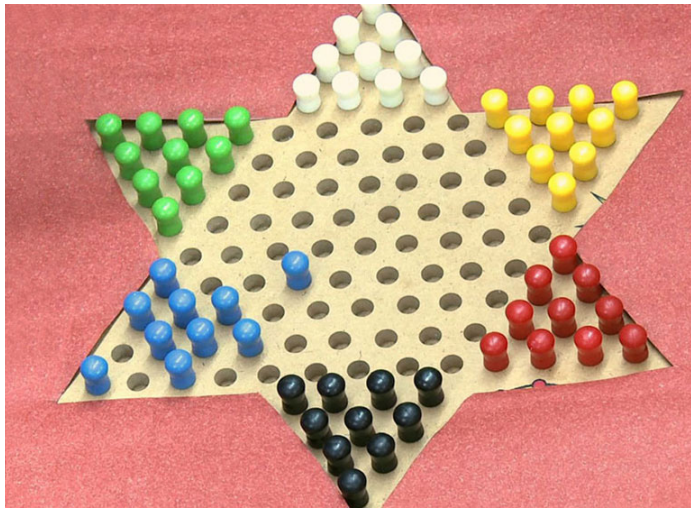

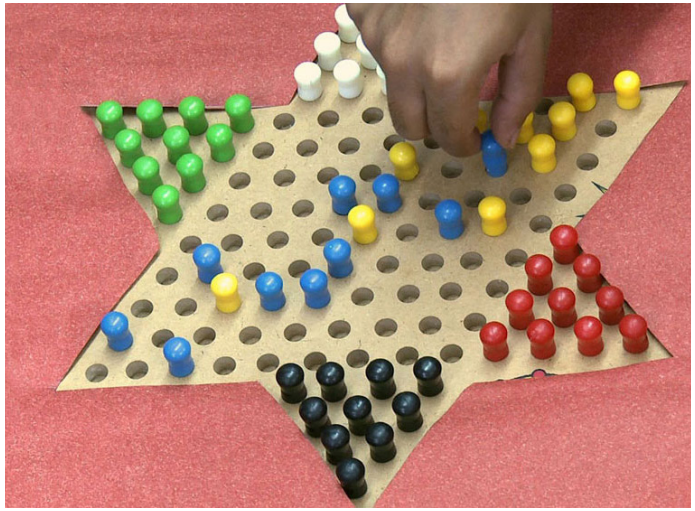

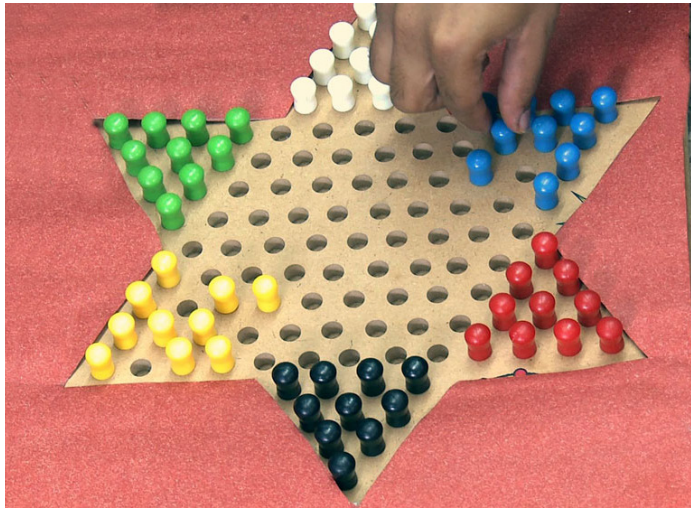

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Ludo

Introduction:
Ludo is a highly simplistic version of *Pachisi*, a game that originated in the 6th century in India. This game is played by younger children all over the country. In this board game, 2 to 4, players race their tokens from start to finish according to the dice rolls. Various variations are seen in the way people play Ludo.

How to Play:
A Ludo board is in the shape of a cross, each arm being divided into three adjacent columns of six squares. The middle squares form the home column for each color and cannot be landed upon by other colors. The middle of the cross forms a large square which is the 'home' area and which is divided into 4 home triangles, one of each color. At each corner are colored areas where the pieces are placed to begin. The typical colors seen in Ludo boards are bright yellow, green, red, and blue.

Each player is assigned a colour and has four tokens of matching colour. The players put their tokens in the starting circle. The movement of the tokens is determined by the dice. During game play the token moves clockwise from the starting square around the perimeter of the board, and up the player's home column to the finishing square. Players are not allowed to move a token out of the starting area unless they roll a 6 on the dice. In this game, players have to carefully play their token or they run the risk of sending it back to the starting point to start all over again. When player 1's token lands on a square that is already occupied by Player 2's token of different color, Player 2's token is returned to its starting point. A player who brings all their tokens to the finish wins the game.

Conclusion:
The game of Ludo provides a platform for people of varied age groups to interact with each other. The young ones learn to count as they move their tokens in their turns. Children learn to strategize and make decisions to win the game.

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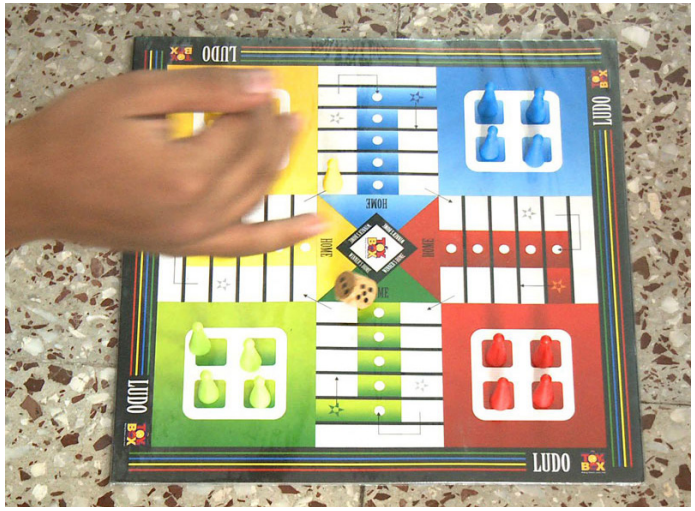

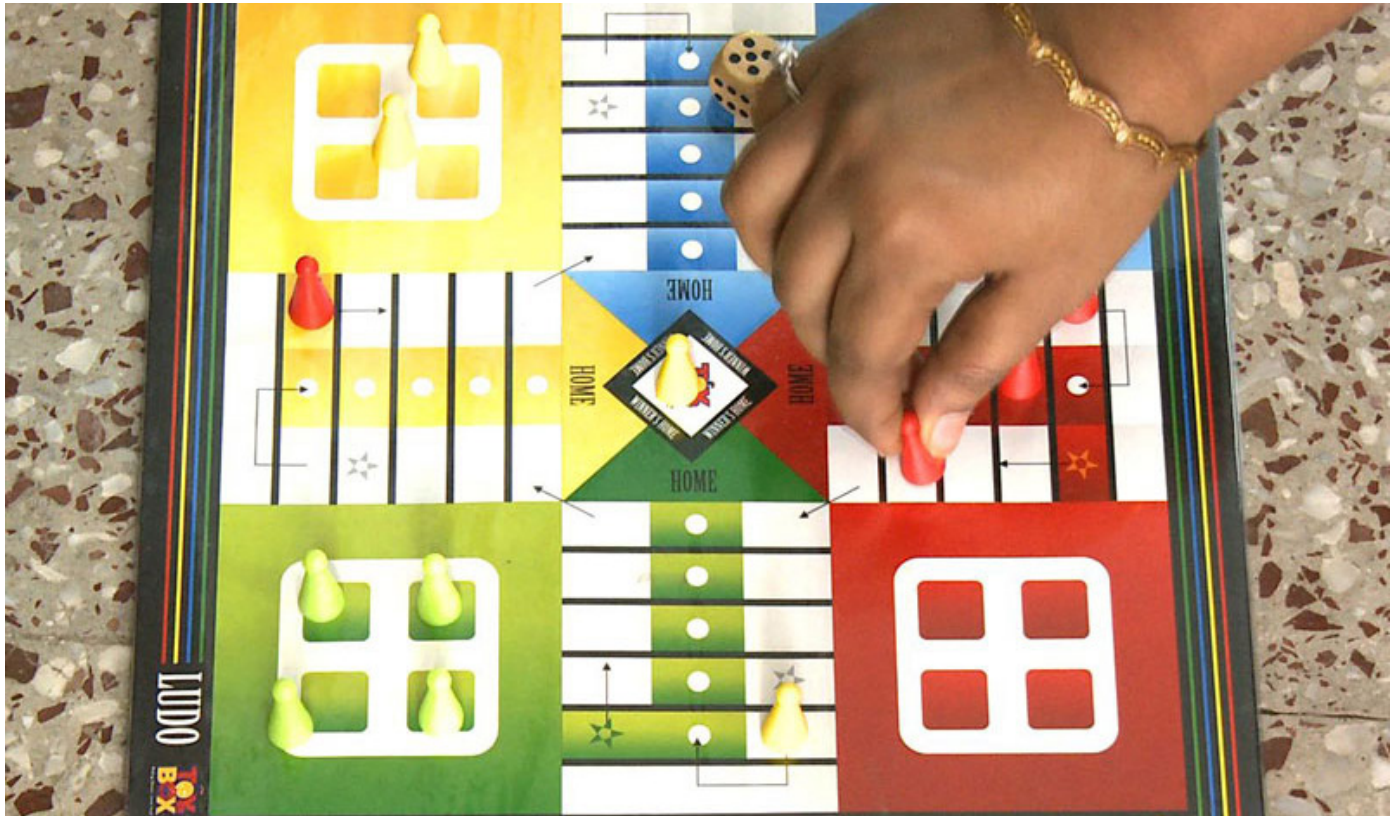

Source:
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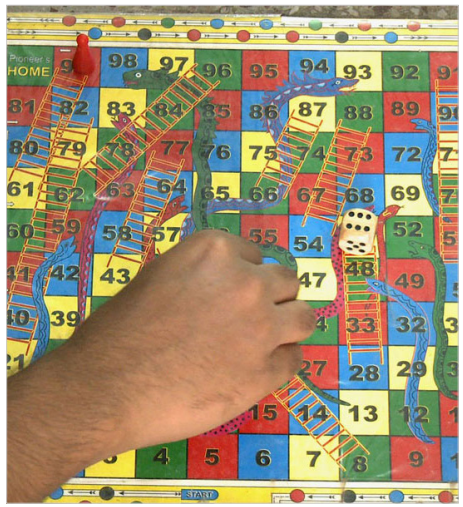
Moksha Patam

Introduction:
Moksha Patam is an ancient Indian game on which the modern day *Snakes and Ladder* game is based on. *Moksha Patam* was a board game used by religious leaders to teach the differences between good and evil - climbing up the ladders representing good and sliding down the snakes representing evil. During the colonial era, the game made its way to England and was renamed as *Snakes and Ladders*. This 2-4 people game has been popular across generations and can be played by people of all ages.

How to Play:
It is played on a ten by ten square board, numbered from 1 to 100; 1 is the starting square and 100 is the end square. The board has numerous snakes and ladders of varying lengths printed on the board. Players also need colored tokens and a single die. The objective of the game is to reach the end of the board, or the 100th square first. The players start with the token at the starting square marked as '1'. The players have to take turns in rolling the dice to move the token by the number of squares indicated by the die roll. If the token lands at the base of a ladder one climbs it but if it falls on a square with a snake's mouth, they come down to the tail of the snake. The player to reach the 100th square first is the winner.

Conclusion:
In this enthralling game, young children learn counting, numbers and sequencing. People of all ages play this game and interact with co-players of varied ages. It teaches the important aspect of 'luck' and how it can affect real life through our moves and deeds.



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Pallankuzi

Introduction:
Pallankuzhi, *Pallanguli*, or *Pallakuli* is a traditional two-player board game played by people of all ages. In Tamil, *Pal* means 'many' and *kuzhi* means 'pit,' a fitting description for this game which requires a board with many pits. In absence of a board to play on, rural women make pits in the mud to play. The pits contain shells, seeds, small pebbles, or semi-precious stones used as coins.

The board indicates the prosperity of the family. Rich family holds prestige in owning a *pallankuzhi* board in gold, silver, sandalwood, ivory or in other materials of value. Women from wealthy families play with original pearls or ruby stones as coins. Common people use tamarind seeds, cowry shells or pebbles as the coins to play.

How to Play:
Pallankuzhi is played with a rectangular board that has two rows and 7 pits on each side and pebbles/coins. To begin, each pit is filled with 6 coins (the number of coins varies). The first player picks up coins from one of the pits and starts to drop them in an anti-clockwise direction in each succeeding pit. If the player reaches the last pit in the row, he/she continues on their opponent's side.

Once the last coin is dropped, player takes the coin from the next pit and continues playing in the same way. If the last coin falls into a pit where the next pit is empty, the coins in the pit beyond the empty pit are captured and stored by the player. The player continues playing from the next cup containing coins. If the last coin falls into a pit with two empty holes beyond, the player's turn comes to an end. The opponent now continues to play in the same way, taking coins from any of his pits and going around dropping the coins in a counter-clockwise direction. If, after dropping a pebble into a pit, the pit contains four coins; these coins are also captured by the player. The round is over when no coins remain.

Variation:
In a variant of this game, the game continues after the first round. The players now take the coins from their stores and fill as many of their pits as possible with their coins. The winner of the first round will have a surplus of coins which are kept in his/her store. The loser of the first round will be unable to fill all of his holes. These unfilled holes are marked as 'rubbish pits.' In the next round, play continues as before, but without the 'rubbish pit' being included and the player which started second in previous round going first. During the game, if a player has enough coins to fill any of the 'rubbish pits' back, their status is removed and they are again used during play. The game is over when a player is unable to fill any pit with six coins at the end of a round.

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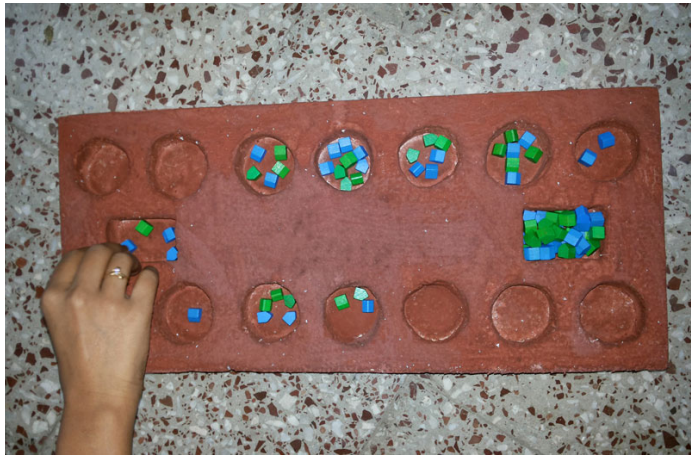
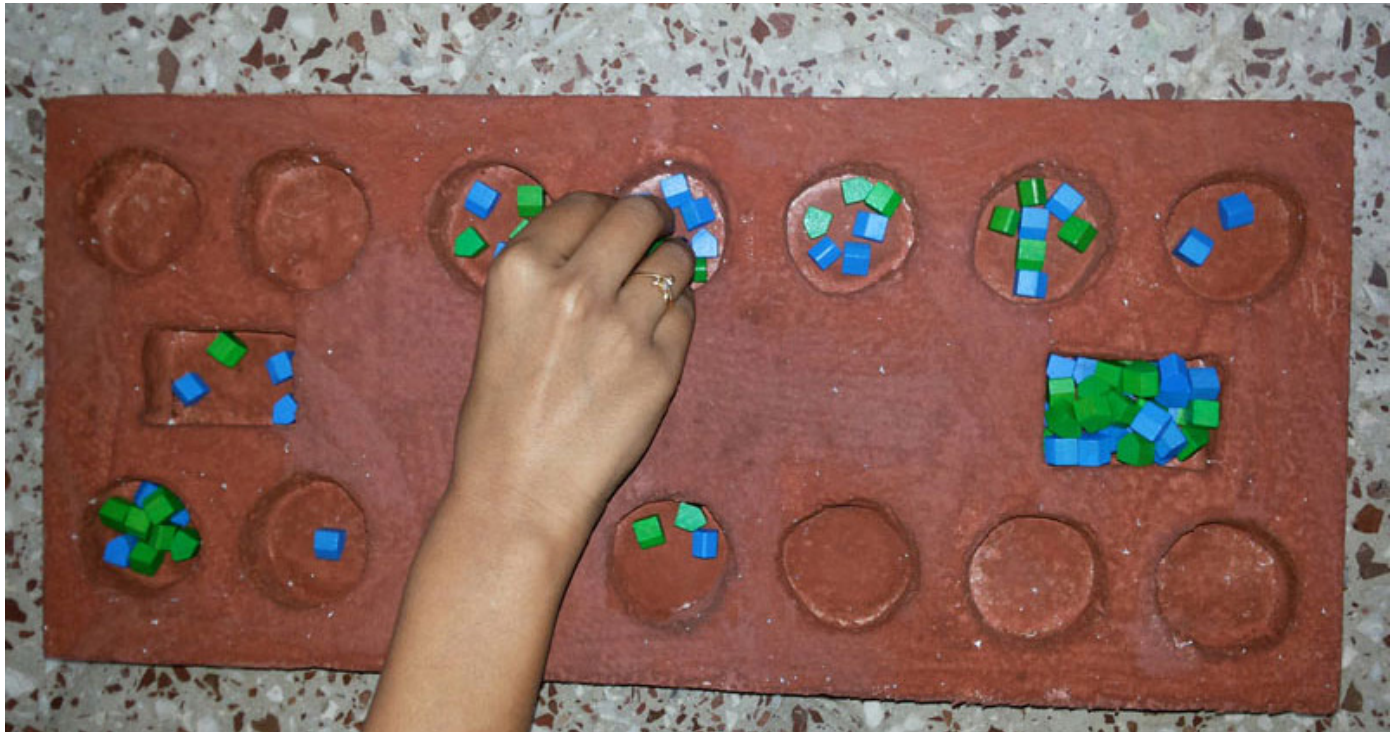
Conclusion:
This game is can be played quickly and helps to improve analytical skills as well as eye-hand coordination. *Pallankuzhi* also improves the math in children as they are involved in rapid mental calculation.





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- www.udaipurtimes.com/8-most-popular-childhood-games-you-stopped-playing/

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Acknowledgements

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Video

Aao Milo Shilo Shaalo

Akkad Bakkad

Chidiya Udd

Cowrie Shells

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January February

Miss Mary Jab Choti Thi

Pacheta

Raja, Mantri, Chor, Sipahi

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We are the Captains

Aankh Micholi

Doctor Doctor Help Us

Gilli Danda

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Kabbadi

Kho Kho

Kokla Chappaki

Lagori

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Kanche

Oonch Neech ka Papda

Posham Pa

Stapoo

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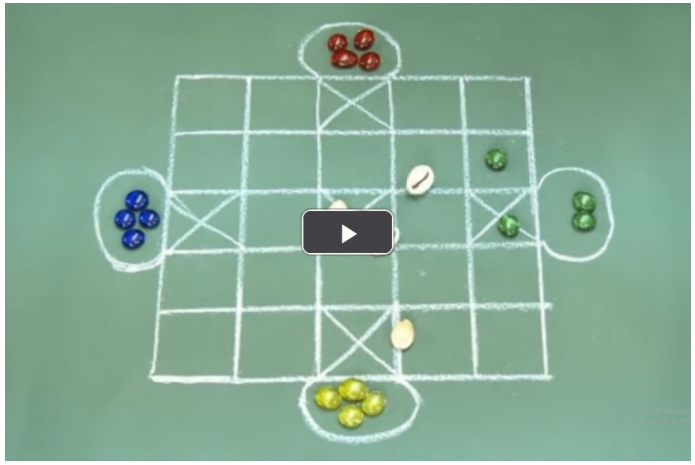
Vish Amrit

Adu Puli Attam

Carrom



Chauka Bara

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Chinese Checkers

Ludo

Moksha Patam

Pallankuzi

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Contact Details

This documentation was done by Seema Periwal at IDC, IIT Bombay.

You can get in touch with her at pdseema[at]gmail.com

You can write to the following address regarding suggestions and clarifications:

Helpdesk Details:
Co-ordinator
Project e-kalpa
Industrial Design Centre
IIT Bombay
Powai
Mumbai 4000 076
India

Phone: 091-22-2159 6805/ 091-22-2576 7802
Email: dsource.in[at]gmail.com